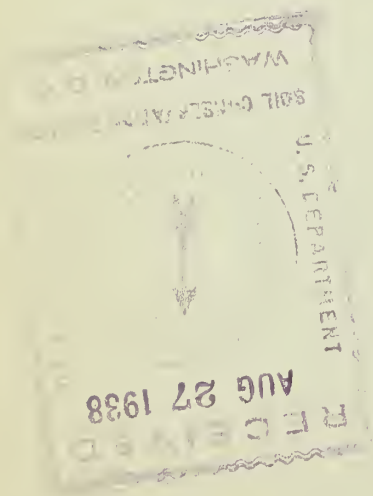


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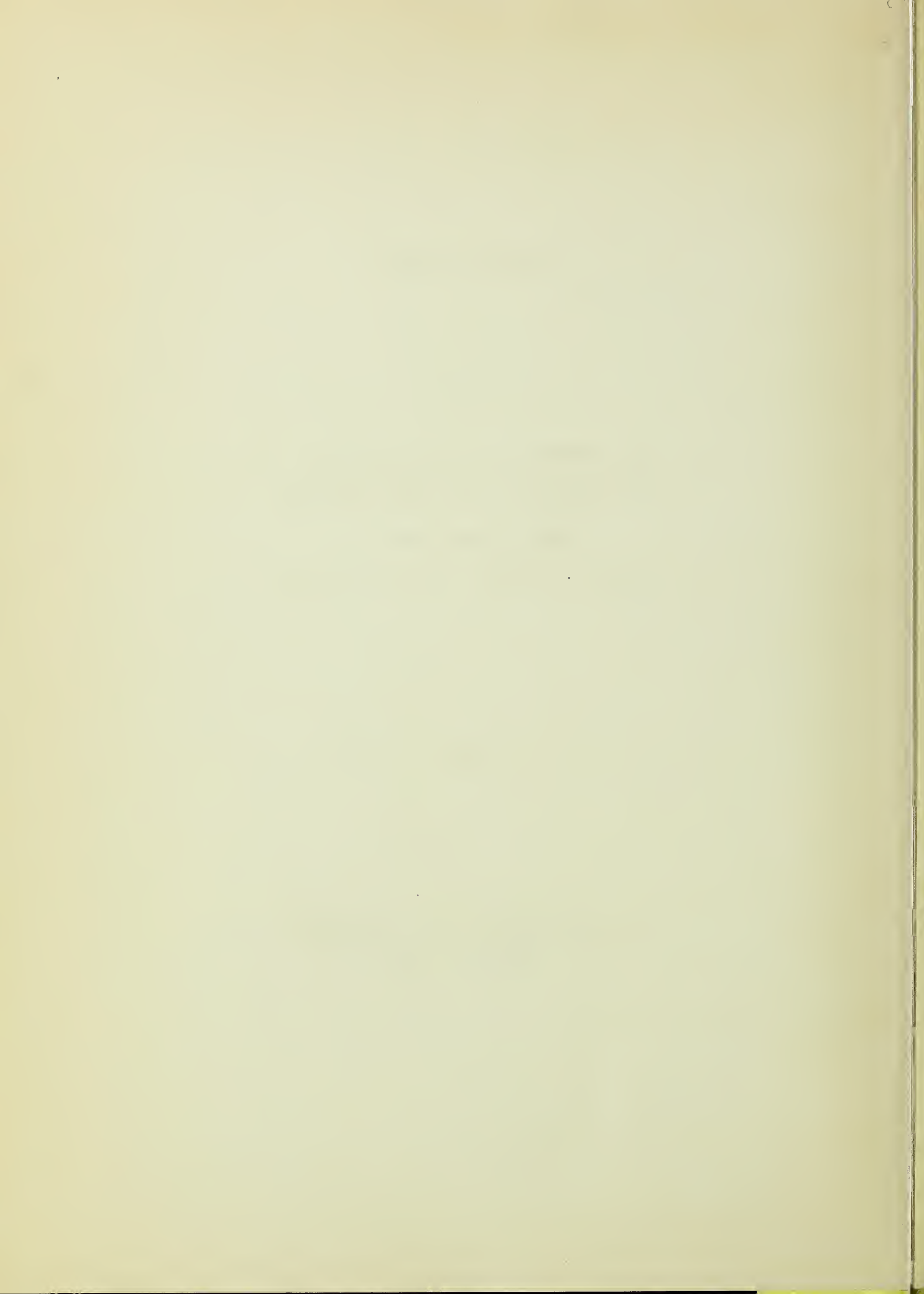
"SWEET CLOVER"

Broadcast No. 19 in a series
of discussions of soil con-
servation in the Ohio Valley.

WLW, Cincinnati

Sept. 3, 1938 6 - 6:15 p.m.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE
Dayton, Ohio



SOUND: Thunder, followed by rain...

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

ANNOUNCER:

A story about one of America's most useful crops--sweet clover! Sweet clover originated in Bokhara, a Central Asiatic country consisting principally of desert and mountain ranges, and devoted largely to raising goats, sheep, and cattle. It was brought into Northern Kentucky by beekeepers, who scattered it along the roadsides. Housewives considered sweet clover a flower, but farmers grubbed it up as a weed. In 1893, Ed Barton and Lewis Plummer were hunting in Pendleton County...

SOUND: Rifle shot.

PLUMMER

Missed him, by golly!

BARTON

There he goes across that field!

PLUMMER

Maybe we'll get him in that grove over there. Come on.

SOUND: Wire fence screeching as men climb through.

PLUMMER

There. Oh, wait!

SOUND: Ripping of cloth.

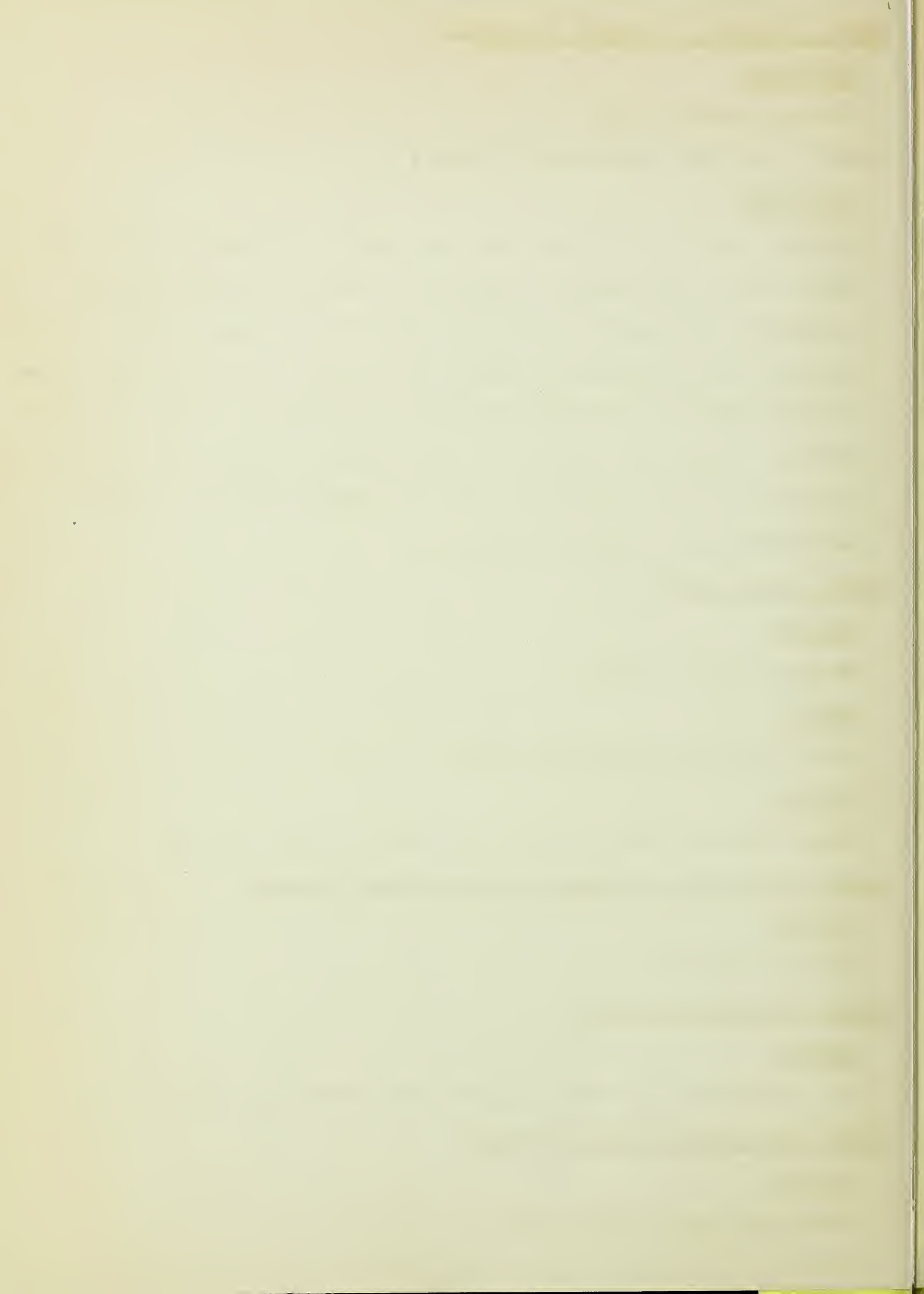
BARTON

Oh, gosh darn it! Well, they're about worn-out, anyhow.

SOUND: Men walking through weeds.

BARTON

Weeds are high, aren't they?



PLUMMER

Yeah, this is an old worn-out pasture. It was so gullied four years ago I didn't think anything would grow on it. This is that darn sweet clover. Spread over from the road.

BARTON

Well, it sure does grow. Too bad it's not good for anything.

PLUMMER

Yeah. It's no good, and neither is this field. It'll never grow anything--except sweet clover, and who wants that?

BARTON

Wait a minute.....look here!

PLUMMER

Say! Kick up some more of that. Why, this soil has changed! Look how black it is!

BARTON

.....and loose! Why, Lewis, you've got good soil here. You know, that sweet clover has done something to your land!

ORGAN:

ANNOUNCER

Lewis Plummer plowed the sweet clover under, and planted corn the next year. And the following winter, on a street in Falmouth, Kentucky.....

SOUND: Wind whistling.

PLUMMER

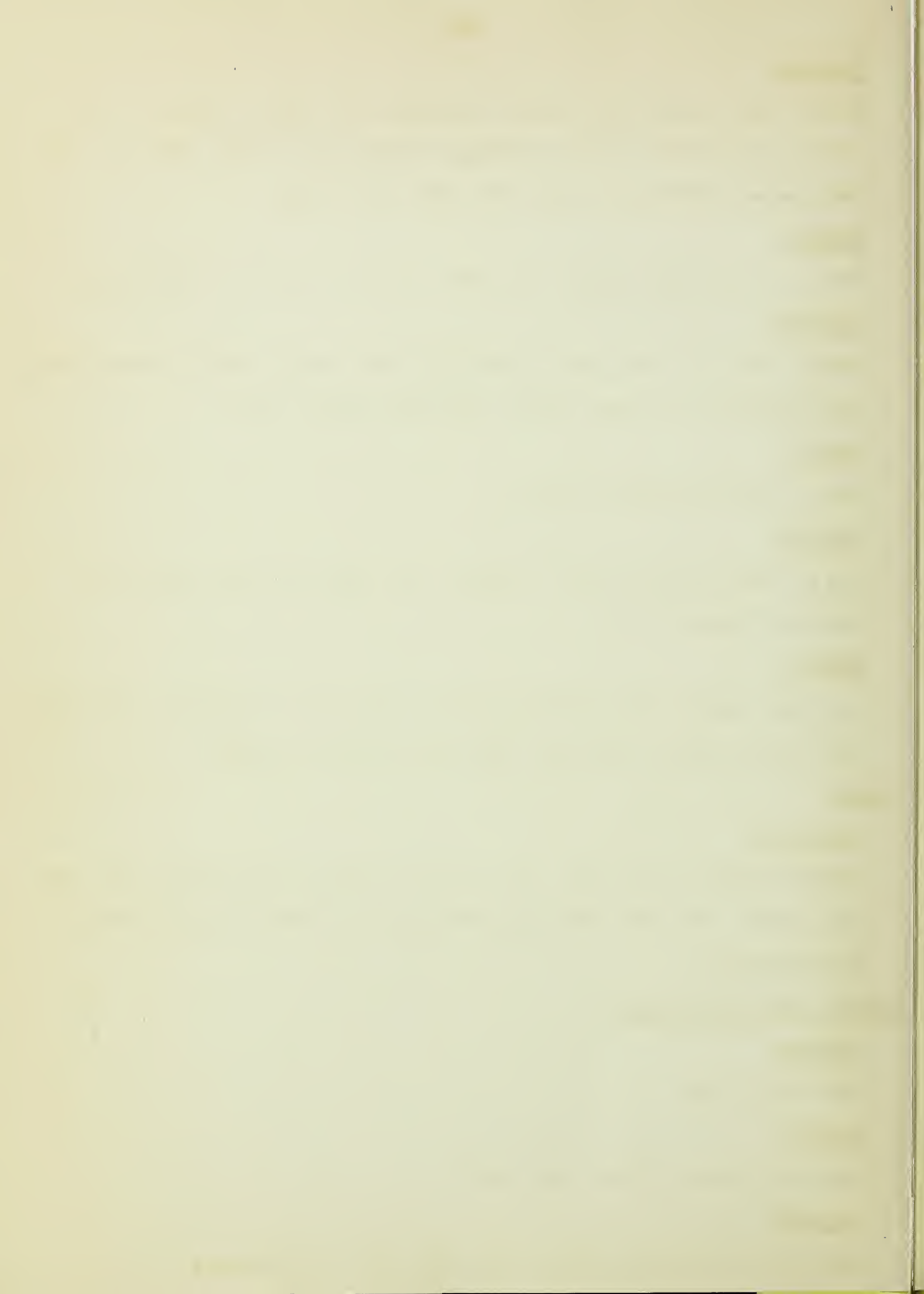
Oh, hello, Ed.

BARTON

Morning, Lewis. How's the farm?

PLUMMER

Say, let me tell you about it. Why, you remember....



BARTON

Let's get in out of this wind. We can go into the office.

SOUND: Door opening and closing. Wind stops.

BARTON

Have a seat over there. Now, what were you going to tell me?

PLUMMER

Ed, you remember that sweet clover field of mine--that old gullied pasture?

BARTON

Oh, yes. You plowed it up, didn't you?

PLUMMER

Yes, sir, and let me tell you that's the best soil I've got on my place. I'm going to try more sweet clover next spring.

BARTON

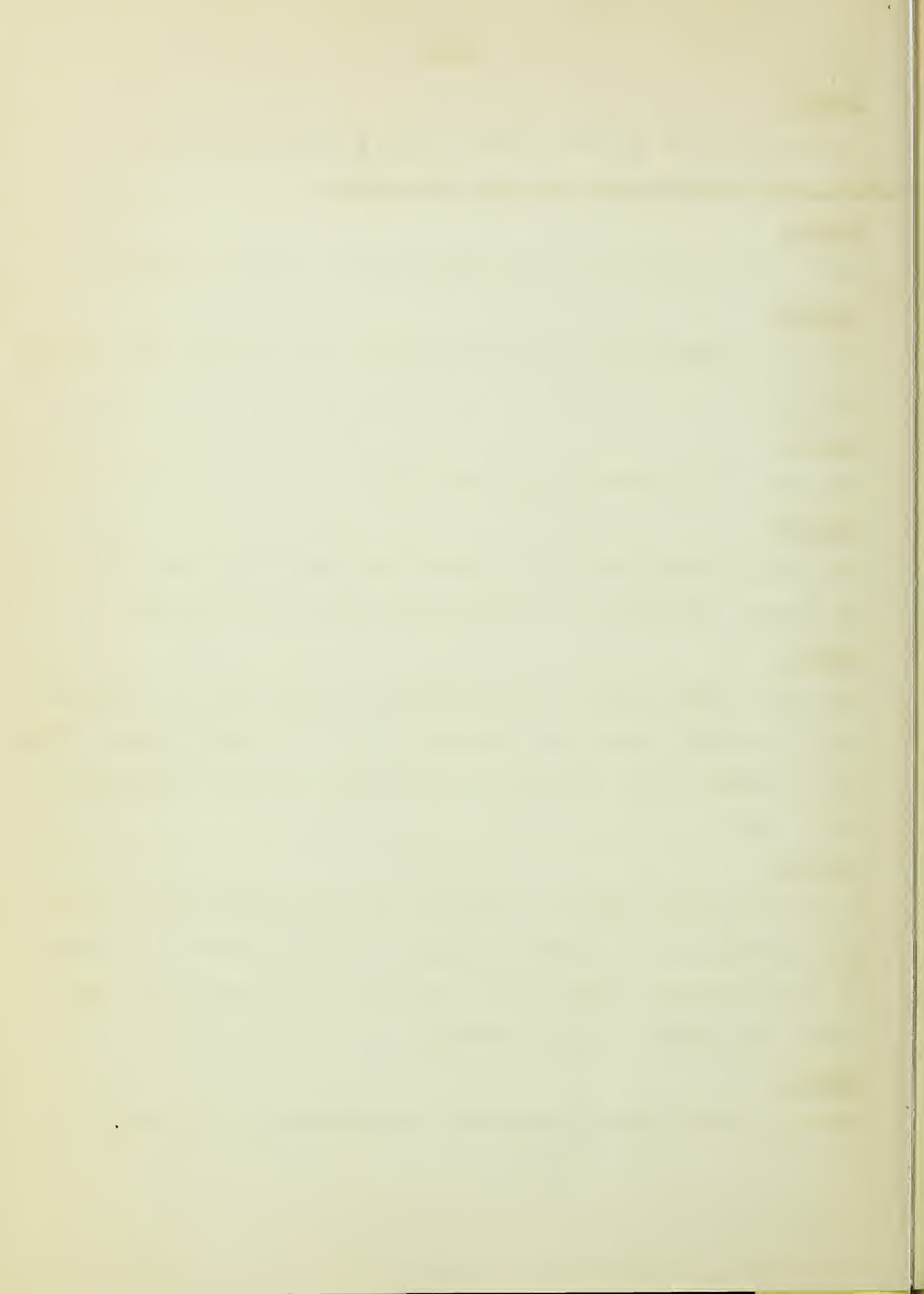
Why, Lewis, you know, if sweet clover did that for your field, a lot of farmers around Falmouth are going to be mighty happy. I've been looking at the farmlands around here, and some of them are awful poor.

PLUMMER

I know they are. But I'm convinced that this sweet clover we've been grubbing up as a pest is going to be the salvation for some of these worn-out lands. It's not only a good fertilizer, but it'll stop washes on hilly fields.

BARTON

Hmmmm....maybe there's commercial possibilities in it, too.



PLUMMER

Well, you'll have a hard time selling much seed, but I believe it can be done. Some of my neighbors saw what happened to that four-acre field of mine, and they've been asking a good many questions about it.

SOUND: Door opening and closes.

BARTON

Good morning, Mr. Chipman!

PLUMMER

Hello, N. B!

CHIPMAN

Howdy, folks, howdy. Just dropping by and thought I'd stop in and pass the time with you, Ed.

BARTON

I'm glad you did. Mr. Plummer and I were just talking about sweet clover. He's had some remarkable success with it, he tells me.

CHIPMAN

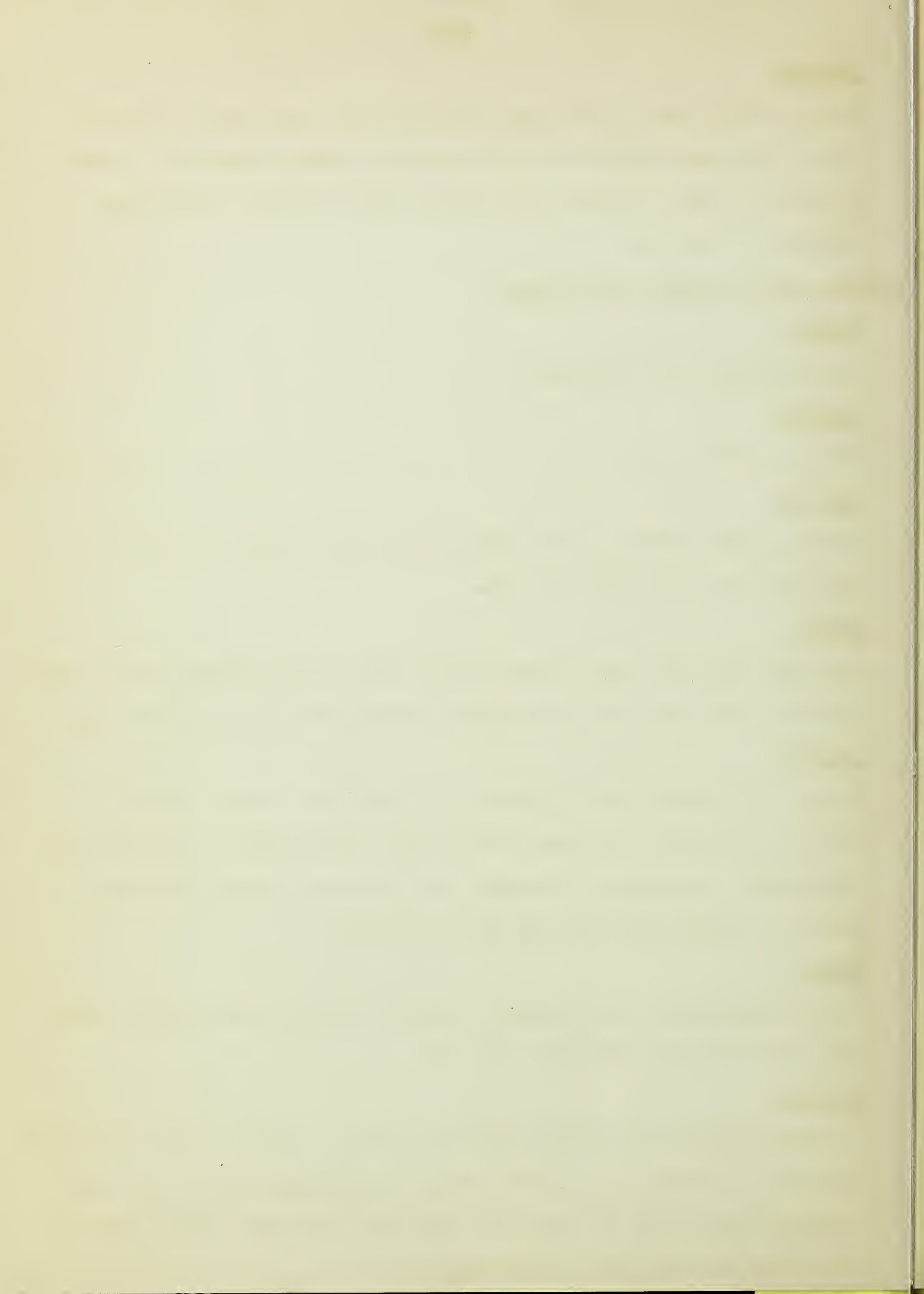
Well, now, I have too! I think it's the best forage plant we have for pasture. It makes more feed, comes early in the spring, and stands up during a drought. It's the best plant I've ever known to restore old washed, poor fields.

BARTON

I was wondering if we couldn't organize some of the farmers next year and get their seed and sell it.

CHIPMAN

I imagine they'd be glad to sell it, because most of 'em don't want any part of sweet clover. But say, I heard that one of the seed companies had a man in town not long ago, and he's coming back in the spring to see how it's grown.



PLUMMER

That so? Tell him to come out to my place, and I'll show him. I've found that it takes hold and grows all right in thin and poor soils where red clover and alfalfa won't even start.

CHIPMAN

And I think you can use it to restore old fields without laying out a lot of money. You can sow it on top of the ground without cultivation. Then, when you sow it in gullies it soon levels them up by catching the soil as it washes down.

BARTON

Yes, sir, I still think that sweet clover has commercial possibilities. In fact, gentlemen, I'm going to put an ad in the paper this summer and buy all the seed I can get.

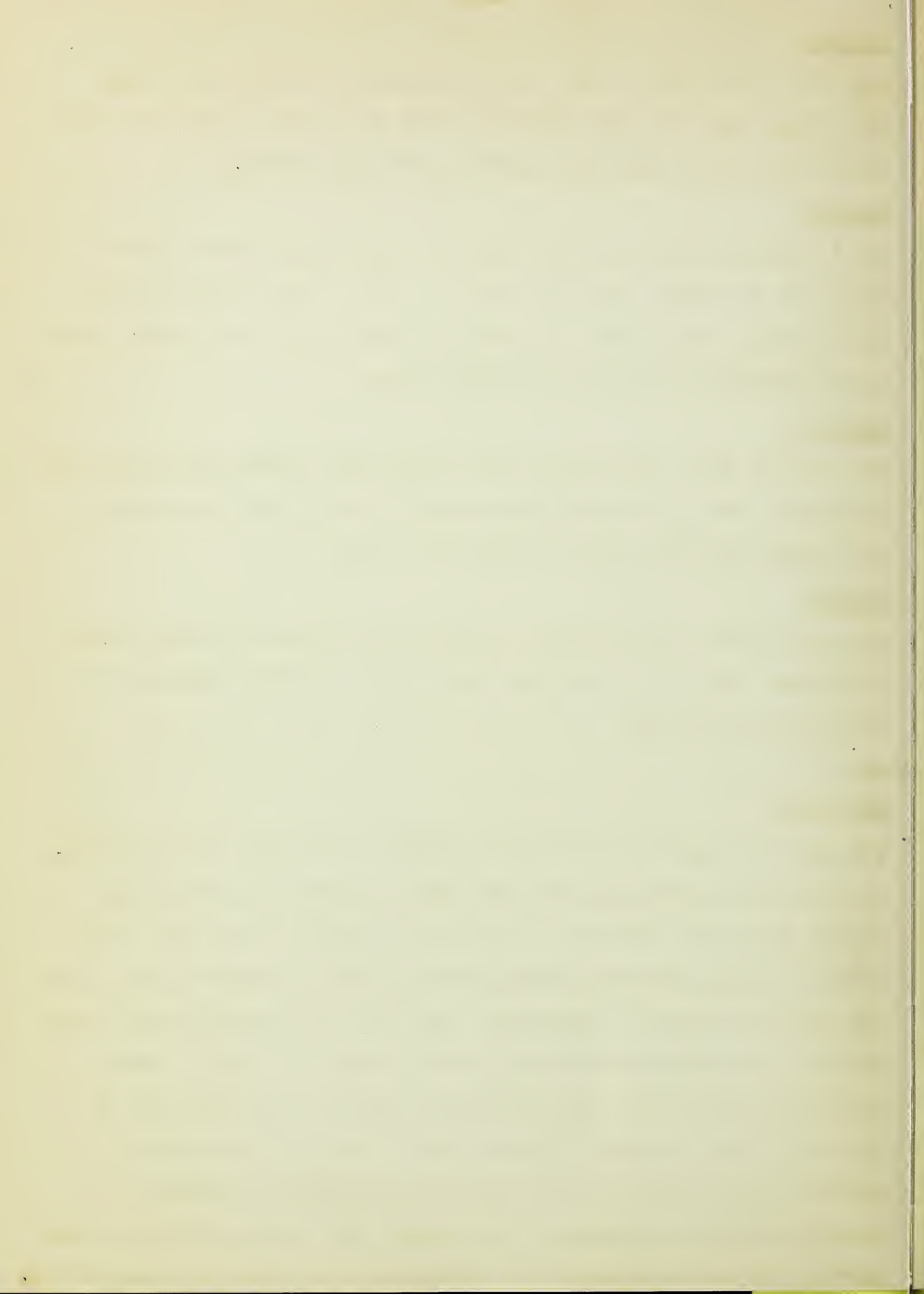
CHIPMAN

I'd go a little slow, Barton. You've got to educate people about it first. It'll be a long time before sweet clover spreads over much of the country.

ORGAN:

ANNOUNCER

But land in Pendleton County had reached a low state of fertility. Pastures were short and corn and tobacco yields were dropping. Farmers began the practice of scattering sweet clover over their farms for gully control. This practice added nitrogen to the soil, and bluegrass came in naturally. 1908 was an exceedingly dry year. Pastures and meadows burned up. Cattle began to feed on sweet clover and liked it. Since that year, sweet clover has been an important crop for gully control, and for use in pastures and meadows. And agriculture in Northern Kentucky has undergone a change, since an old beeman named Bagby, and a young attorney named Barton, saw the advantages of a so-called weed known as sweet clover.



ORGAN:

ANNOUNCER

This story of the development of sweet clover in Northern Kentucky comes from the Soil Conservation Service in Dayton, Ohio, and here is our soil conservation spokesman, Ewing Jones.

JONES

Thank you, _____. Well, what do you think of sweet clover by now?

ANNOUNCER

Frankly, Ewing, I was surprised to learn that sweet clover was once considered a noxious pest. All the farmers I've talked to lately just about depend on it.

JONES

The use of sweet clover has certainly expanded in the Corn Belt during the last twenty or thirty years. At present it's well established as a regular crop in most farm plans. Ed Barton deserves a lot of credit, too. He bought 10,000 pounds of seed the first time he tried it. He sent samples to a number of agricultural experiment stations, and did a lot of promotion work to encourage the development of sweet clover.

ANNOUNCER

He ought to know about all there is to know about the subject, then.

JONES

I suppose we're all learning more about it as we study it,
_____. Mr. Barton has had plenty of
experience with it. Just now he's writing an agricultural history
of Pendleton County, and although I haven't seen the manuscript,
you can rest assured that sweet clover will be given an important
role in that history. But as I said a moment ago, we're all
learning more about it every day. The Soil Conservation Service
has an erosion control demonstration area in Pendleton and Grant
Counties, and the project is finding sweet clover a sturdy ally
in the fight against soil erosion on those steep Kentucky hills.
Mr. Alan T. Leffler, project agronomist, is here today, and I'm
going to ask him just what part sweet clover plays in the soil
conservation work in the Grassy Creek project.

ANNOUNCER

Fine, then I'll retire to a neutral corner to watch the debate
between Alan T. Leffler, of Falmouth, Kentucky, and Ewing Jones,
of Dayton, Ohio. The subject: sweet clover.

JONES

There won't be any debate, though, _____. Alan is
probably the better authority. But to break right into the sub-
ject, Alan, let me ask just what part sweet clover plays in the
soil conservation work in the Grassy Creek project.

LEFFLER

It plays a mighty important part, Ewing. Most of our farm plans
include the use of sweet clover in pastures and meadows, and for
gully control, too.

JONES

But not all your cooperators use it, do they?



LEFFLER

Not all, but most of them. Just as an example, there's Elmer Thornton, of Pendleton County. His farm is almost on the edge of Grassy Creek, and he has a remarkably heavy growth of sweet clover this year. Next spring he's going to turn it under as green manure.

JONES

If he has a heavy growth, that should add a lot to the soil. I remember reading in a University of Kentucky bulletin that a good stand of sweet clover will add from 100 to 250 pounds of nitrogen per acre to the soil, if pastured or plowed under. That's about the same amount of nitrogen you'll find in from 10 to 25 tons of farm manure.

LEFFLER

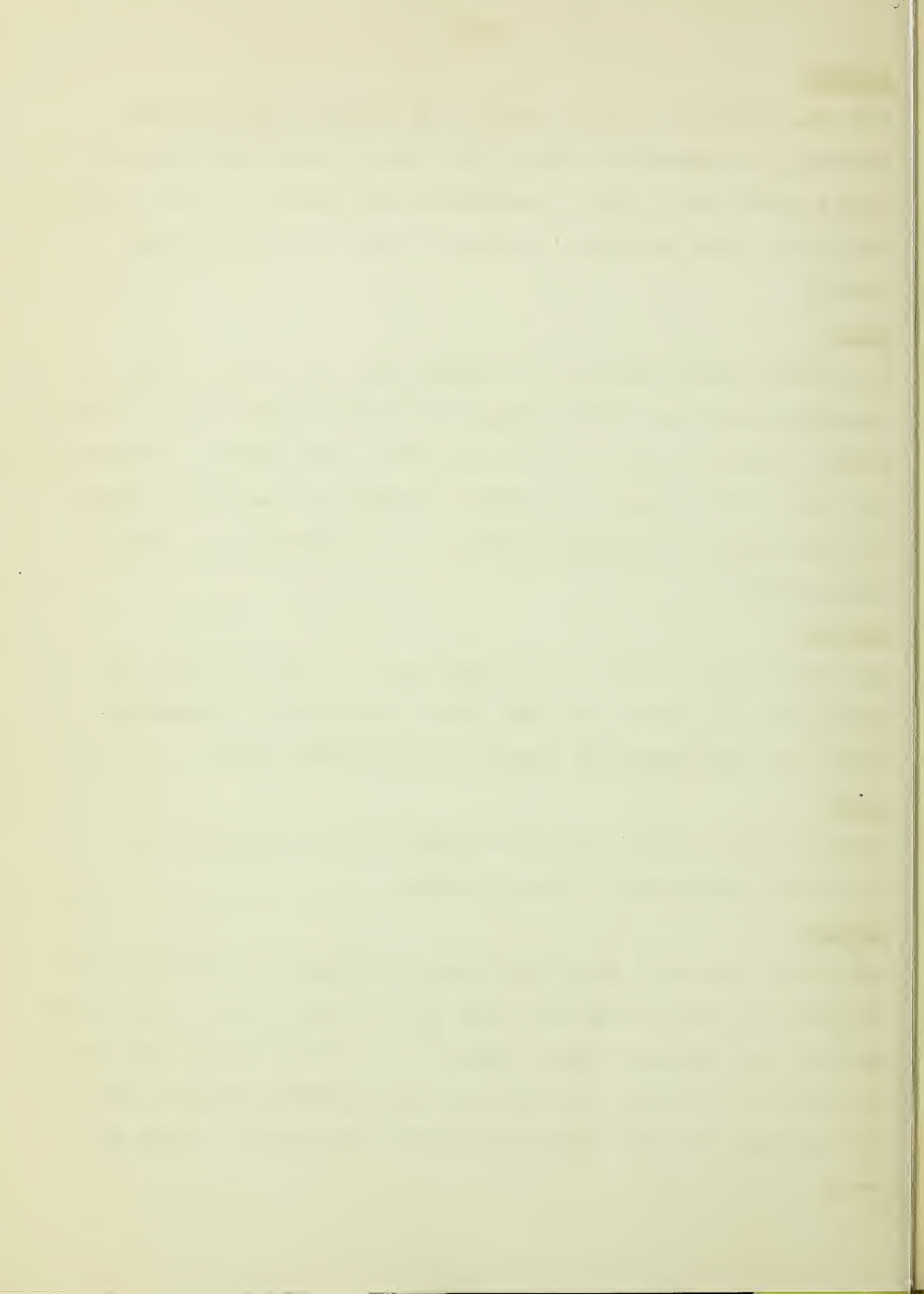
And even when you use it as a catch crop, it may add almost as much nitrogen to the soil. But there's one thing to remember, Ewing, the land should be limed in almost every case.

JONES

That's right. Liming and inoculation are two essentials for successful production of sweet clover.

LEFFLER

And lime is the most important single requirement. Probably more failures in sweet clover have been due to lack of lime in the soil than to any other one cause. Except in localities where the soil is known to be neutral or alkaline, tests should always be made to determine its lime requirement before attempting to grow the crop.



JONES

And most county agricultural agents are equipped to make these soil tests. -

LEFFLER

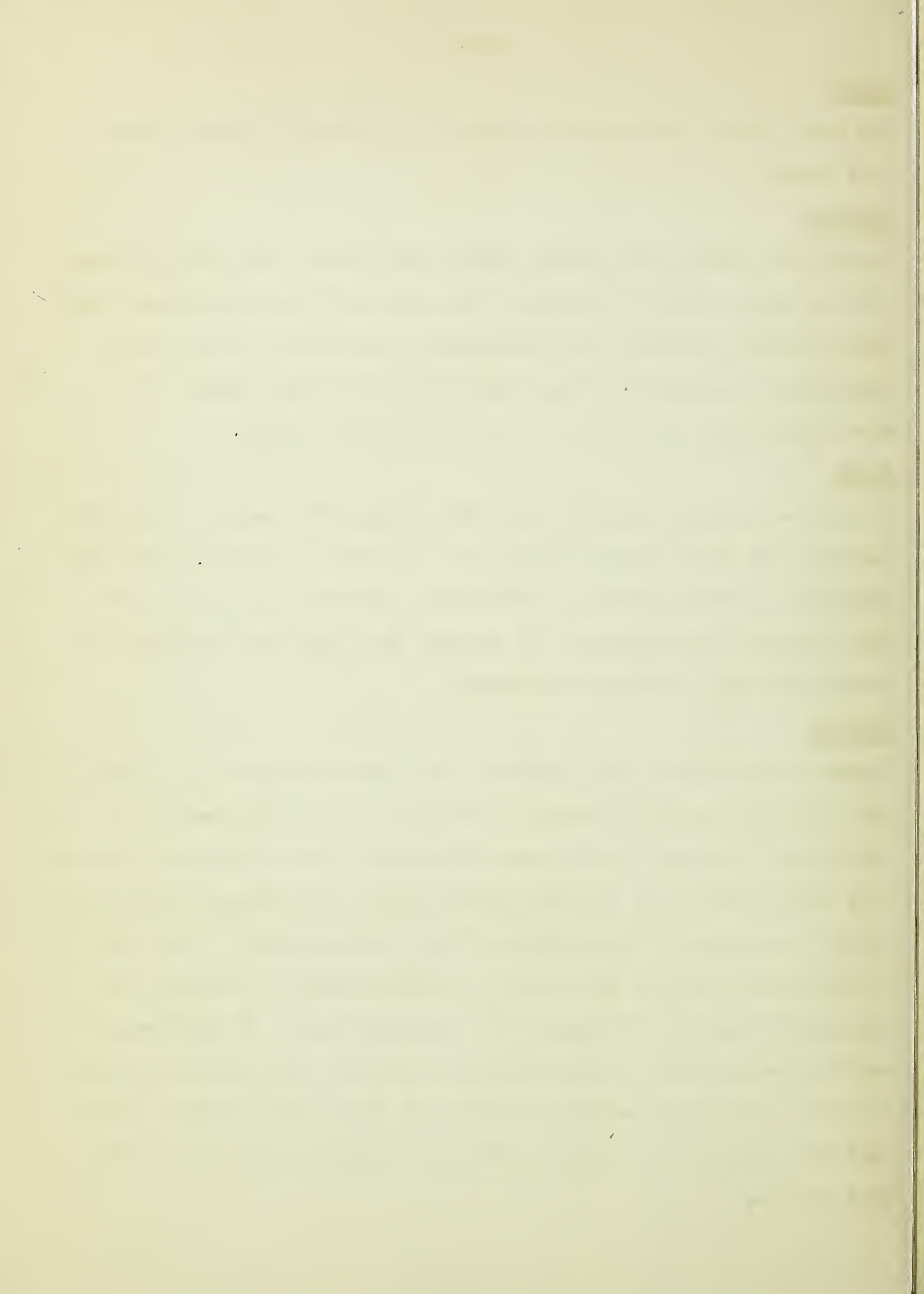
Or they can advise the farmer how to make them. And about inoculation, Ewing, that is important and shouldn't be neglected. Some farmers make a practice of inoculating their sweet clover seed each year, feeling that they can't afford to risk failure or a poor stand when the cost of inoculation is so small.

JONES

I think we should bring out the fact, Alan, that many of the best pastures are those where grasses and clovers are mixed. With the different plants maturing at different periods of the year, you get a variety and abundance of grazing when pastures composed of fewer varieties are brown and bare.

LEFFLER

That's an important point, Ewing. You know a mixture of alfalfa and a grass, such as timothy, is better for an erosion-control agent than straight alfalfa, and that holds true with sweet clover, too. The practice of seeding other clovers and grasses with sweet clover is gaining in popularity. This gives variety to the diet of livestock, lessens the danger of bloat, helps to bridge over the gap that may occur between the grazing season of second-year and first-year sweet clover, and it lengthens the grazing season. On soils that heave badly in winter the grass roots tend to protect the sweet clover and cut down the damage to the stand from this source.



JONES

One of the things that has impressed me most is that sweet clover is such a versatile crop. Of course, one of the principal purposes in growing sweet clover is to restore or increase soil fertility, but on most farms the crop also serves several other purposes. I've noticed that it's used for hay, pasture, and as a seed crop.

LEFFLER

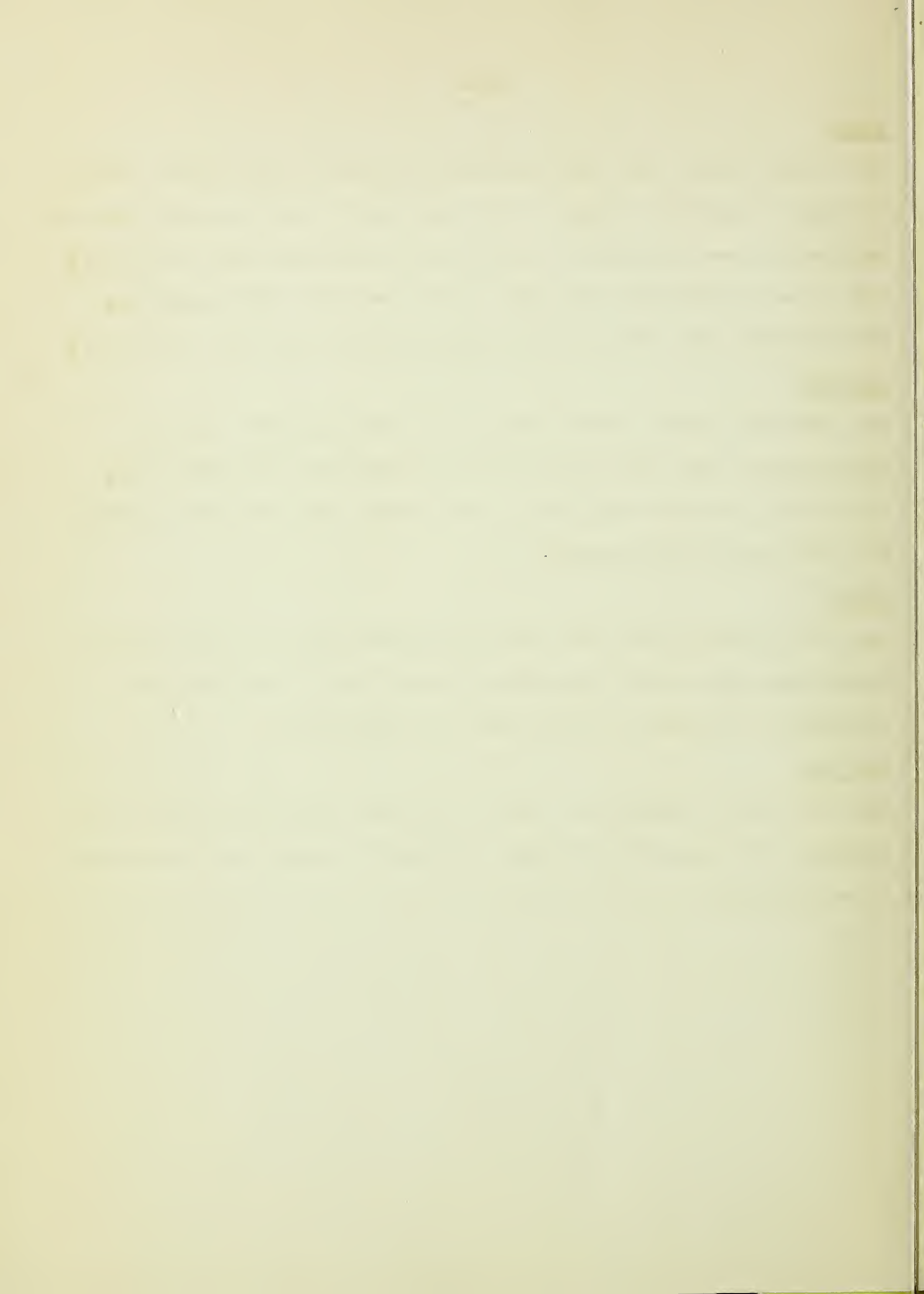
But it's when sweet clover is used for both pasture and soil improvement, that you get the greatest benefits from the crop. As a rule, it will carry two or three more times as many animals per acre as will bluegrass.

JONES

And, of course, it got its first prominence when it was used by beekeepers, who sowed the seed in waste places and along the roadsides to provide a honey crop for their bees.

LEFFLER

And it's still regarded as one of the best plants for honey production. The quantity of honey produced is large and the quality is excellent.



JONES

Well, Alan, we started off talking about bees, and we've wandered through the erosion control field, and now we're back to bees again. Thank you for your remarks, Alan Leffler, and now, I believe we should do a little summing up. As I see it, this is how the summary stands: Sweet clover, a roadside weed 25 years ago, today is a crop of considerable economic importance in the Corn Belt. It fits readily into most of the established cropping systems of Corn Belt farms. Sweet clover is used for hay; it produces more pasture than any other crop common to the region; and it is unequalled by any other legume for soil improvement. And the whole field of soil conservation has been strengthened because a beekeeper scattered sweet clover along the roads at the close of the nineteenth century, and because farmers tried sweet clover, experimented with it, and praised it.

ORGAN:

ANNOUNCER

Next week, Master Farming.....

SOUND: Thunder, followed by rain.

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away is an educational presentation of the Nation's Station.

